

of recent revised rate of BPL/APL rice through PDS for the adversely affected people specially in the hill areas;

(b) if so, the steps taken in this regard; and

(c) if not, the alternate arrangement taken up?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Based on the recommendations of the Expenditure Reform Commission, Central Issue Prices of Wheat and Rice for distribution under Targetted Public Distribution System have been revised with effect from the 25th July, 2000, as follows:

(Rs. per quintal)

Commodity	BPL	APL
(i) Wheat	415	830
(ii) Rice		
Common	565	—
Grade 'A'	565	1130

Wheat and Sugar in Warehouses

2686. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are facing the problem of plenty of wheat and sugar;

(b) if so, what is the excess amount filled in the warehouses; and

(c) what action is proposed to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) and (b) The stock position of

wheat in the Central Pool as on 1.07.2000 as compared to the buffer norms is as under:

Figs. In lakh

Commodity	tonnes		
	Stock as on 1.7.2000	Buffer norms as on 1.7.2000	Excess
Wheat	277.57	143	134.57

The Sugar produced by the mills is stocked at their level and only specified quantities both for distribution under PDS as also for sale in the open market are despatched against release orders issued by Government from time to time. With the carry over stock of 67.23 lakh M.Ts., from the last sugar season i.e. 1998-99 and the expected production of the current Sugar Season of 180.0 lakh M.Ts., the total availability of the indigenous sugar would be around 247.23 lakh M.Ts. as against the total expected internal consumption of 150.84 lakh M.Ts. Thus, at the end of current 1999-2000 (October-September) Sugar season, the closing stock is estimated to be of the order of 96.39 lakh M.Ts.

(c) As regards wheat, with a view to offload its excess stocks. Government has taken a decision to explore the possibilities of commodity loan/Barter trade of wheat with SAARC countries or other countries which could supply us other commodities in exchange, and export of wheat on Government to Government Account. Beside, under the ongoing Open Market Sale Scheme (Domestic) of wheat, earlier FCI was authorised to dispose of wheat from Punjab at the rates of Rs. 700/-, Rs. 750/- and Rs. 800/- per qtl. for the months of July, August and September, 2000 respectively. After reviewing the lifting position of wheat under the scheme for the month of

[17 August, 2000]

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July, 2000, this scheme has been extended to all the Zones for the months of August and September, 2000 and the FCI Issue prices have been fixed as under:

Zone	Rate per qtl.	Effective from
North	Rs. 650/-	9.8.2000
South	Rs. 743/-	11.8.2000
West	Rs. 724/-	11.8.2000
East	Rs. 736/-	11.8.2000

As regards Sugar, in order to liquidate its excess production stock, Government has allowed export of 10 lakh tonnes of sugar and also exempted sugar factories from levy obligation on the qty. of sugar they export. This exemption is valid from 1.6.2000 for a period of six months.

Review of the Existing System of Procurement of Foodgrains

2687. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have reviewed the existing system of the procurement of foodgrains in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there is a scope for improvement in the existing system; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by Government in that regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) Concentration of procurement of foodgrains in a few States led to many problems, with regard to the levy of taxes, storage and also transportation of foodgrains to different consuming centres